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di Leopardi, etc.," as prefaces to the poems or essays, of which the orthodoxy was dubious. Ranieri had to remind the publisher that they were publishing "*Leopardi*, non LEOPARDI CONFUTATO" (96), and Le Monnier compromised by printing the censor's notes at the end of the *Canti* and of the *Operette morali*, in the first volume, and by putting the *Avvertenze* at the end of the volumes, for the contents of which they were to serve as an antidote. The latter have been reprinted by Dr. Serban (245-250), and their every inane phrase is an excellent argument for the foundation of a United Italy.

Le Monnier played Ranieri false another time (163-183), out of fear of a loss in the sale of his publications in "qualche contrada d'Italia, dominata da' Gesuiti" (175), by not wishing to reprint his refutation of the Jesuit slander that Leopardi had died converted in the arms of a member of the order. It is worthy of noting in the same connection that Montanari's own copy of his *Elogio biografico* of Leopardi was incomplete, having suffered at the hands of the censor of the Roman States (220), and that Ranieri warned Le Monnier not to write to him by post in regard to Leopardi (118); for "una troppa maggiore sicurezza" (169), mail was sent in an unofficial way by steamers, going from Naples to Pisa, so as to escape the postal censors. A number of evident mistakes made in transcribing the letters could be pointed out. It is enough to note that the book of Leopardi which Creuzer considered not worth publishing in German, even in extracts (13; cf. *Leopardi et la France*, 271), was the *Saggio sopra gli Errori popolari degli antichi*. As he states, this juvenile work of the poet contained only material generally known to the learned world since the publication of the *De origine et progressu idolatriæ, siue de theologia gentili* of Gerard John Vossius, for it is to this latter work that Creuzer refers in the phrase "*Lib. Gyraldus. Germ. Vossini*," which Dr. Serban found "presque indéchiffrable," and which he does not undertake to interpret.

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CORRESPONDENCE

A NOTE ON VOLUME TWO OF THE 1640 FOLIO OF BEN JONSON'S PLAYS

The paging of the first three plays in this volume of the folio is as follows: *Bartholomew Fair*, pages 1-88; *Staple of News*, pages 1-75; *Devil is an Ass*, pages 93-170. The question has been as to what occupied the pages between page 75 of *Staple of News*, and page 93 of *Devil is an Ass*.

The Elizabethan Club of Yale has separate folio copies of *Bartholomew Fair* and *Devil is an Ass*. A study of these brought to light the fact that the numbering of the pages of these two plays is, allowing for one blank leaf between them, consecutive. This fact points to these two plays having appeared in one volume, and *Staple of News* in a separate volume, before the folio was made up. The Elizabethan Club copies are of slightly different size, and have different markings in the binding left on their backs. This shows them to have come from different copies.

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O PROPER STUFF!—*Macbeth*, III, iv, 60

These words seem, so far, to have baffled all the commentators. No real definition of either the separate words or of the phrase as a whole has been offered, and the explanations given are but the purest guesses. The phrase is not, perhaps, of vital importance to an understanding of the play, but correctly interpreted it throws some light upon one of the most important aspects of the play, and helps to make clear the relations of Lady Macbeth to her lord and to his crimes.

None of the comments that I can find shows any appreciation of the words of the phrase, but all alike content themselves with an attempt to define the subjective mood of the speaker. Clark and Wright, in the Clarendon

Press edition of the play, give this explanation: "Mere or absolute nonsense, rubbish. We have 'proper' used in a contemptuous exclamation in *Much Ado about Nothing*, i, 3, 54, and iv, 1, 312. For 'stuff' see *Measure for Measure*, iii, 2, 5, and *I Henry IV*, iii, I, 154." Furness gives only the Clarendon note, and Editor II adds a quotation from Scott. Rolfe's note is obviously a restatement of the same conception: "Ironical and contemptuous. Proper (=fine, pretty, etc.) is often so used." These citations will suffice, for most other editors simply follow the Clarendon note without comment of their own.

Nor do the Shakespearean lexicons take us any nearer the true meaning. Schmidt's *Lexikon* gives two uses of "stuff," the second of which is: "Especially things spoken or recited: Usually in contempt," and for which our passage is cited as an instance. Cunliffe's *New Shakespearean Dictionary* does not give any definition of "stuff," and under the definition of "proper" does not cite this passage. Neither the commentaries nor the dictionaries, then, have given us the true meaning.

The words are spoken by Lady Macbeth to her lord just after their company have sat down to the Banquet. Macbeth has declined to be seated, for, as he says, "The table's full." He sees the ghost of Banquo in his place, but as no one else seems to see it his words are not understood. The guests are about to rise because of Macbeth's strange actions and words, when Lady Macbeth urges them to keep their seats, assuring them that "The fit is momentary." When chided for his behavior, Macbeth excuses himself by referring to the sight as that "Which might appal the devil." Then Lady Macbeth says to him

O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear:

This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan.

That is, she is telling him that what he now sees is but the projection of his own inner fear, and is but another vision of "the air-drawn dagger," which came entirely from his own

mind, or as she puts it is his own (proper) stuff.

The use of "stuff," in a subjective sense, for the things of the mind or spirit, is common enough in Shakespeare. It is used again in this sense in the last act of the play where Macbeth asks the Doctor if he cannot

Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? (*V*, iii, 44-5.)

It is also used in a similar sense in several other plays, of which the following are the two most important:

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.
Hamlet, II, ii, 324.

Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience
To do no contrived murder. *Othello*, I, ii, 2-3.

In two passages the word "stuff" is associated with "dream," and has a somewhat similar connotation:

'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue and brain not. *Cymbeline*, V, iv, 146-7.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on. *Tempest*, IV, i, 156-7.

There need be no difficulty with "proper," the other word in the phrase.¹ It is very frequently used, as here, in the etymological sense of "one's own" (Latin, *proprius* = 'one's own'). Two examples of this use will suffice: "My proper life," *Hamlet*, V, ii, 66; and "Our own proper son," *Othello*, I, ii, 97.

This interpretation makes it clear that Lady Macbeth does not at any time see the ghost of Banquo, and that Macbeth's vision is but the fear that arises from his guilty conscience. Lady Macbeth has apparently had no part in the murder, for it is not on her conscience, but only on her lord's. With the murder of Duncan her superior moral nature had all but col-

¹C. T. Onions (*A Shakespeare Glossary*, Oxford, 1911) recognizes the required meaning of *stuff*, "matter, in a fig. sense," though he does not cite the passage here discussed. He also reads *proper* in a number of passages with the meaning 'one's own,' but cites the passage here discussed as illustrating the meaning "excellent, capital, fine (ironically)." —J. W. B.

lapsed, and Macbeth had to commit all the other crimes himself. The play is therefore primarily the story of Macbeth and his crimes, for not only the visions of daggers before the deeds, but the visions of ghosts afterward, are all his "proper stuff," or the projection of his mind alone.

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BUT ME NO BUTS

Bartlett, in his *Familiar Quotations* (ninth edition, pp. 861-2), gives nineteen examples of the use by English writers of phrases formed on the analogy of "But me no buts." Chronologically they run from Shakespeare and Peele to Tennyson and Bulwer-Lytton; alphabetically from "But me no buts" and "Cause me no causes" to "Virgin me no virgins" and "Vow me no vows." I have from time to time noted other uses of this form of speech in various English plays, and they may be worth recording.

"Blurt me no blurts." Middleton: *Blurt, Master Constable*, iv, 3.

"Confer me no conferrings." Shirley: *The Wedding*, iv, 3.

"Good me no goods." Beaumont and Fletcher: *The Chances*, i, 8.

"Hear me no hears." Porter: *Two Angry Women*, i, 2.

"Heart me no hearts." *The same*, ii, 4.

"Leave me no leaving." Ford: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, i, 2.

"Lord me no lords." Shirley: *Hyde Park*, v, 1.

"Star me no stars." Shirley: *The Wedding*, v, 2.

"Take me no takes." Shirley: *Hyde Park*, ii, 2.

"Treat me no treatings." Wycherley: *Love in a Wood*, iii, 2.

"But me no buts," which Bartlett quotes from Fielding and Aaron Hill, has been used in the anonymous play *Wine, Beere, Ale and Tobacco* in 1630. "Madam me no madams,"

which he refers to Dryden's *Wild Gallant*, the same writer had used in his *Evening's Love*, act iii, sc. 1. While it would be interesting to know of any earlier use of this locution, it is worth noting that it crops up in contemporary writers. The Baroness Von Hutten, in the *Green Patch* (1910, p. 330), has "Only me no onlies." An English critic, in a notice of Strauss's *Fledermaus* in 1910, indignantly exclaimed "Fleder me no fledermice!" and finally, I noticed in the *Woman's Home Companion* for October, 1911, the phrase "Jest me no jests."

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BELLS RINGING WITHOUT HANDS

Reviving the subject of bells ringing without hands, in the *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXX, p. 28, Mr. Phillips Barry has given an admirable collection of the earliest cases of the belief. May I round it off by giving the latest? One of the present warring monarchs is said to have issued a proclamation to the Poles last fall, reminding them that, it would seem very recently, the bell of the Holy Swiatogorsky monastery began to ring at night without human aid, and that the pious recognized this as signaling a great event; to wit, according to the monarch, the present war and all the beneficent results sure to follow. This was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* (31 Oct., 1914) from the *Gazetta* of Czenstochowa, in Russian Poland near the German border, by way of Petrograd. The monastery in question is undoubtedly the ancient and celebrated Jasnagóra monastery in Czenstochowa, its name (Bright Mountain) being translated into Russian as Swiatogorsky. The rest of the proclamation is also interesting to students of the past. Whatever the authenticity of the report, it shows the belief is still living in eastern Europe.

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